

FIRST ANNUAL

Gladiolus Festival

— AND —

Historical Pageant

At Momence, Illinois

Interesting Events

In The History of Kankakee,

Iroquois and Will

Counties

Depicted in a Setting on the

Banks of the Beautiful

Kankakee River

Friday - Saturday - Sunday

August 19, 20, and 21, 1938

MOMENCE,

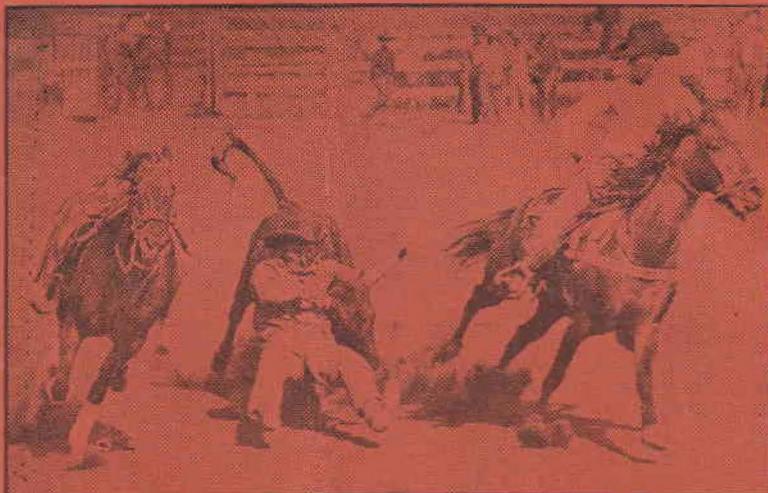
ILLINOIS

In the Heart of the Largest Gladiolus Fields
in the World



WILL COUNTY FAIR PEGTONE, ILL.

August 30-31, September 1, 1938
DAY AND NIGHT PROGRAM—FINE ENTERTAINMENT



ADAMS' RODEO—PLEASING FEATURE

DRINK IT

Golden
Orange KIST
AND OTHER KIST FLAVORS

REG. U. S. PAT. OFF.

JAKE SCHAAFSMA

GROWER OF

FINE GLADIOLUS, CUT FLOWERS
AND BULBS



1/2 Mile East of Wichert, Ill.

History and Origin of the Gladiolus

Visitors to the city of Momence on August 19, 20 and 21 will find a city resplendent with lanes of beautiful gladiolus. The whole city will, by that time, be a virtual garden of the flowers which once grew wild on the mild coast of East Africa. The flowers were prevalent in the 18th century and were found mostly where the spray of some waterfall gave them plentiful moisture. Some, however, were found on rocky cliffs and others grew prolifically on the arid plains and tablelands.

In the early 18th century there were but three known varieties of "glads", when they found their way from the wilds of Africa to the fields of Holland, where early in the 19th century their popularity and hybridization began. The first hybrid produced was a bright, red spike of fragrant flowers. The next step came

when an improved white flower was developed, which became known as "The Bride". Then followed many other changes and developments, until at the present day there are some 160 varieties. The original flower has become one of the most beautiful floral creations in the world. During its blooming season there is no flower more popular, nor more generally used for every type of decoration.

The ease with which gladioli are grown makes them especially suited for garden purposes; while their diverse colors, stately spikes and excellent keeping qualities make them favorite cut flowers during their blooming season. The extensive use of gladioli in border and landscape planting is just now in its beginning and is rapidly proving an attractive value.

“Orange Kist” Bottling Company

— PHONE 363 —

See Ad. on Cover.

Momence, Illinois

Foreword

To the Industry and perseverance of those sturdy Holland farmers who from the small beginning in 1909 in the little community of Wichert, Illinois, the Gladiolus industry has grown in this section until now Eastern Kankakee County is the largest Gladiolus fields center in of the world, this program is dedicated.

Momence Gladiolus Festival Assn.

Organized in 1938

President	Russell France
Secretary	Mrs. George Fox
Treasurer	Elmer Deliere

Board of Directors

MRS. GRACE FRANCE	MRS. DOROTHY RUGE
RICHARD BLANKESTYN	
C. C. SHERWOOD	EARL DuFRAIN
J. B. STOUT	
ARNOLD SHERWOOD	W. M. HOLMES

Organized and promoted in recognition of the value and worth of having such an industry in our midst by the various civic bodies of the city of Momence, working in conjunction with the Kankakee County Gladiolus Association.

C. STROO

BYRON STROO

Stroo's Gladiolus Farm

$\frac{1}{4}$ Mile East of Wichert

Fancy Gladiolus, Flowers and Bulbs

WICHERT

ILLINOIS

Progress of Gladiolus In Kankakee County

The growing of gladiolus in this vicinity started in 1909, when C. S. Claussen of Chicago, who had a pickle factory in Wichert, Illinois, was growing a few glads at his Chicago home. Because of the city smoke and gas, growing was unfavorable and the glads were planted in newly-acquired gardens at Wichert. The results deeply interested several other gardeners of the locality----among whom A. P. Bonvallet saw their commercial possibilities and purchased a few for experimental purposes. About one-quarter of an acre was placed in cultivation. The results were very gratifying. Despite the fact that the flowers were little known for their cut-flower value at that time, the public soon sensed their advantages over other flowers and a ready market for them was

created.

About five years later a few more gardeners started to grow them; since that time each year more and more growers have become interested in their cultivation. This particular territory is now the largest field center in the world---some 500 acres now devoted to their production.

During the blooming season the flowers find a ready market, but the bulbs form the main crop and are sold all over the United States. The production of bulbs in this vicinity reaches well into the millions each year. Because of the superior growing qualities of the gladiolus the demand is constantly increasing. The forty growers are now devoting much time and effort to gladiolus improvement.

Peter Salm & Sons

Peter Salm—J. C. Salm—B. P. Salm—S. R. Salm

Gladiolus Bulbs Our Specialty

$\frac{1}{4}$ Mile Northwest of Wichert

ST. ANNE

ILLINOIS

Richard Voss

— Grower of —

FINE GLADIOLUS BULBS and CUT FLOWERS

ST. ANNE,

ILLINOIS

PROGRAM

Gladiolus Festival ^{AND} Historical Pageant

August 19th - 20th - 21st

DAY BY DAY

(CENTRAL STANDARD TIME)

FRIDAY, AUGUST 19th—OPENING DAY

Any Hour—Tour Gladiolus Lanes and Farms

10 a. m. to 9 p. m.—FLOWER EXHIBIT

10 a. m. to 9 p. m.—ANTIQUE DISPLAY—Admission 10c

1 p. m. GRAND PARADE OF FLORAL FLOATS
for Prizes

6:30 p. m. SPECIAL BAND CONCERT

8 p. m. PAGEANT

"FEATURING WILL COUNTY"

Admission 35c

CROWNING OF QUEEN

Pageant Grounds

BAIRD-SWANNELL, INC.

KANKAKEE, ILLINOIS



— Experts In —

HEATING AND PLUMBING

A. P. Bonvallet & Co.

Pioneer Gladiolus Growers



WICHERT, ILLINOIS

Farm located on main road one mile east of Wichert
— Visitors are always welcome —

PROGRAM

Saturday, August 20
CHILDREN'S DAY

ANY HOUR—TOUR GLADIOLUS LANES and FARMS

10 A. M. to 9 P. M.—FLOWER EXHIBIT

10 A. M. to 9 P. M.—ANTIQUE DISPLAY

Admission 10c

1 P. M. PARADE OF SCHOOLS

Colorful Pageantry on Parade

6:30 P. M. AWARDING OF PRIZES for CHILDREN'S PARADE

7:30 P. M. AWARDING OF PRIZES FOR FLOATS

Pageant Grounds

8 P. M.—PAGEANT—FEATURING IROQUOIS COUNTY

Admission 35c

Peter Devries

"GROWER OF FINE GLADIOLI"

3 1/2 Miles Southwest, Rt. 1

Momence, Illinois

RICHARD BLANKESTYN

GLADIOLI GROWER

Bulbs of Good Quality

Have over 20 acres and have been in the business twenty years. Also growing imported varieties. Making my business to grow the better varieties. Write for my wholesale list. Stock is true to name and free from thrip.

TELEPHONE 190-W

—:—

427 N. MAPLE ST.

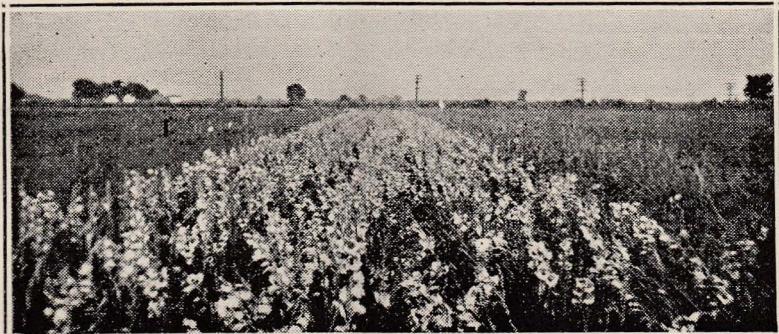
MOMENCE, ILLINOIS

Ritsema Brothers

Gladiolus Growers



— INVITE YOU —



This Scene is on Farm of Ritsema Bros., Momence, Illinois

One of the scenes you will view in your tour of the Gladiolus farms, lanes, during the Gladiolus Festival.

FRED VOSS

— Grower of —

FINE GLADIOLUS BULBS and CUT FLOWERS



On Dixie Highway 1½ Miles West of Wichert

ST. ANNE, ILL.—ROUTE 3

PROGRAM

Sunday, August 21

ALL CHURCHES FEATURING SPECIAL SERVICES
ANY HOUR—TOUR GLADIOLUS LANES and FARMS.

1 P. M. to 9 P. M.—FLOWER EXHIBIT

1 P. M. to 9 P. M.—ANTIQUE DISPLAY
Admission 10c

1 P. M.—GRAND PARADE—FLOATS, BANDS and
PAGEANTRY ON PARADE

2 P. M. to 3:30 P. M.—BAND REVIEW—ISLAND PARK

6:30 P. M.—MASS BAND CONCERT

7:30 P. M.—AWARDING OF PRIZES TO BANDS
Pageant Grounds

8 P. M.—PAGEANT—FEATURING KANKAKEE COUNTY
Admission 35c

SUNDAY, 2 P. M.—Island Ramblers Motorcycle club of Blue
Island, Ill., Field Meet at Ed Chipman farm, 1 mile north of
Momence.

TUNIS DeYOUNG

On Dixie Highway

FOR

Dependable Gladiolus Bulbs

Visit Our Gardens

Route 3

ST. ANNE,

ILLINOIS

FIRST ANNUAL
Kankakee County Gladiolus Ass'n
Flower Show

COMMUNITY BUILDING

Momence - Aug. 19 to 21 - Illinois

SECTION I

First, Second and Third Prizes

Commercial Growers' Exhibit

Three Spike Class

Red, Orange, Pink, Yellow, White, Lavender, Purple, Smoky or
any other color exhibit.

SECTION II

Basket Classes—Foliage and Ribbon Permitted

SECTION III

Commercial Displays

SECTION IV

Best Basket or Vase for Stand.

Best Floor Basket for the Home.

Best Arrangement of Tips in Bowl.

Best Original Idea for Decorative Purposes

Best Novelty Display.

SECTION V

Championship of Show on Spikes.

Championship of Show in Baskets.

Amateur Grower Division

Any local *Gladiolus* grower is invited to enter the amateur class with exhibits in above classifications.

Amateur Grower's Exhibit

— Sponsored By —

GARDEN DEPT. OF MOMENCE WOMAN'S CLUB

COMMUNITY BUILDING MOMENCE, ILL.

August 19-20-21



Ribbons Awarded

Class I—Gladiolus.

Class II—Asters.

Class III—Zinnias.

Class IV—Roses.

Class V—Marigolds.

Class VI—Dahlias.

Class VII—Low Bowl Table Decoration.

Class VIII—Large Basket Mixed Flowers.

Class IX—Combination Bouquet.

Class X—Single Blooms.

Class XI—Potted Plants.

Class XII—Novelty Display.



Any local amateur gardener is invited to enter this show with exhibits in the above classifications.

CONGRATULATIONS!

We, the American Bulb Company, congratulate the Gladioli growers of Momence and vicinity in their interest to advance the use and popularize the Gladioli flower. We wish you success.

AMERICAN BULB CO.

Chicago, Ill.

1335 W. Randolph Street

New York, N. Y.

31 West 27th Street

“Blazing The Trail”

A Pageant Depicting the Early History of Will, Iroquois and Kankakee Counties

Written by Kathleen Spencer Hess

STAGED BY ROY G. HESS

Prologue—Time Turns Backward.

Scene 1.—Joliet and Marquette in Will County.

Scene 2.—LaSalle encamps upon the Kankakee.

Scene 3.—Life Among the Pottawatomies.

Episode 1.—Indian Village.

Episode 2.—Council of Women.

Episode 3.—Legend of Wach-l-kee.

Episode 4.—Pokagon's Wagon.

Scene 4.—Gordon Hubbard.

Episode 1.—Coming to Bunkum.

Episode 2.—The Trading Post.

Episode 3.—Marriage to Watseka.

Episode 4.—The Danville Ride.

Ed. Miedema & Sons

NICK, JOHN, EDDIE, JR., and LOUIS

GLADIOLUS

Cut Flowers and Bulbs

1½ Miles Northwest of Wichert

Route 3

—:—

St. Anne, Ill.

VAUGHAN'S GLADIOLI

1938 INTRODUCTIONS.

Communist, finest flaming red, each 35c, doz. \$3.50; 100, \$25.
Au Sable, giant orchid lavender, each 15c; doz. \$1.50; 100, \$10 Hopi,
bright maroon, each 6 cents; doz., 60c; 100, \$4; Palm Springs, best
orange buff, each 15c; doz., \$1.50; 100, \$10.

SURE FIRE RIBBON WINNERS, 1939 PRICES

Edith Mason, pink, each 6c; doz. 60c; 100 \$4.

Dearborn, best orange, each 6c; doz. 60c; 100, \$4.

Cadillac, golden apricot, each 8c; doz., 75c; 100, \$5.

Mary Shary, giant primrose yellow, each 10c, doz., \$1; 100, \$7.

Ask for our special list of planting sizes

VAUGHAN'S SEED STORE

10 W. Randolph Street
Chicago, Ill.

47 Barclay Street
New York, N. Y.

“Blazing The Trail”--Cont.

Scene 5.—First Settlers.

Episode 1.—Hubbard Trail

Episode 2.—First School.

Episode 3.—The Circuit Rider.

Episode 4.—Early Post Office.

Episode 5.—Pioneer Marriage.

Scene 6.—Illinois-Michigan Canal.

Scene 7—The Departure of the Indians.

Scene 8—The Gold Rush.

Episode 1—Hill's Tavern.

Episode 2.—Westward Bound.

Scene 9—Garfield for President!

Scene 10.—The Gay Nineties.

Scene 11.—Our Part in the Wars.

Epilogue—Presented on beautiful Island Park on the banks of the
Kankakee River. Cast of 250 AUG. 19-20-21—8:00 P. M.

Greetings from
F. S. ROYSTER GUANO CO.
TOLEDO, OHIO

Manufacturers of

Premium Quality Fertilizers

Distributors Wanted in Open Territory

Early Developement of WILL, IROQUOIS, and KANKAKEE COUNTIES

By Kathleen Spencer Hess

A Chinese Mandarin admired a silver fox pelt, European soldiers discovered that bear-skin shakos made them appear more war-like, and fashionable ladies the world over fancied themselves in cloaks and tippets of mink and beaver. To these human longings for personal adornment, Eastern Illinois owes its development.

STARTS NEW INDUSTRY

In New York John Jacob Astor sought ways and means of catering to these whims, and the American Fur Company was born. Into his itching palm poured money from his far-flung wilderness empire. Voyageurs and coureurs de bois ranged forests and rivers, Indians departed on long hunting treks, but eventual-

ly furs were forgotten in the realization that far greater wealth--the farm lands--were here for the taking.

Salt was also a factor in turning Eastern Illinois into the agricultural and industrial region it is today. For pioneers and Indians alike needed that commodity to maintain life, and the salt marshes of the Vermilion, near where Danville is now located, furnished a ready supply.

NO WHITE MEN HERE IN 1818

It seems odd that at the time Illinois became a state in 1818, all of it was fairly well supplied with settlers, except the area between Fort Dearborn and Danville. Yet this was the case. In all the land between these two points there was not a white man nor a cabin. Only river, marsh and forest, with Indians

(Continued on page 13)

Drink Budweiser!

"THE KING OF BOTTLED BEER"

BYDALEK BROS., Dist.

BUDWEISER BEER — HYDROX BEVERAGES

589 S. West Ave.

—:—

Kankakee, Ill.

Will, Iroquois, Kankakee Co. History -- Cont.

as the sole human beings. For this was a hunters' paradise--large Beaver Lake (near the present town of Lake Village, Indiana) attracted thousands of wild ducks and geese; mink, beaver and otter abounded near the creeks and rivers; bear panther, lynx and deer were to be found in the forest reaches, and buffalo roamed the prairie.

Hence, it was virgin ground for the fur traders, and later for the settlers, who came here from New England, the eastern states, and eventually from France, Belgium and Germany.

INDIANS DWELT HERE

FOR CENTURIES

The Pottawatomies, whose name means "We are making a fire", had dwelt in this land of plenty for centuries. They must have originally come from the regions about Lake

Huron. From accounts of Jesuit missionaries we learn that they seem to have been a superior tribe, more cleanly than the average Indians, very war-like, civil and above average in intelligence. Great agriculturists, they were accustomed to depend upon the land for their main food supplies--Indian corn, beans, peas squashes and melons--all cultivated by the squaws. The braves hunted, fished, played la crosse, or manufactured weapons. The Pottawatomies were idolators, believing in their religious fables, and were also polygamous. Several of the famous chiefs first saw the light of day in the Kankakee valley--Pontiac, Shabbona and Sha-waw-anasee.

Until 1818 then, this land had known no settler save the Pottawatommie, no home but the matting wigwam, no boat but the birch canoe, and the nearest white men were the

(Continued on page 14)

DODGE

SCHULT TRAILERS

PLYMOUTH

DODGE TRUCKS

R. J. CHAMBERLAIN MOTOR COMPANY

Dealer and Distributor

143 S. Indiana Ave.—Kankakee, Ill.

USED CARS AND TRUCKS

R. J. Chamberlain

—:—

Tele. Main 580

Casey's Gladiolus Farm

CORNELIUS KOSTER, Prop.

"GLADIOLUS BULBS OUR SPECIALTY"

One-Half Mile Northwest of Wichert

ST. ANNE,

ROUTE 3

ILLINOIS

Will, Iroquois, Kankakee Co. History -- Cont.

Kinzie and their neighbors at old Fort Dearborn.

True enough, LaSalle and Father Hennepin had come to know this land, for on their voyage of exploration they had portaged from the St. Joseph River in Indiana to the Kankakee, and thence to the Illinois. In Father Hennepin's account of the voyage he describes this region as being largely prairie, whose grass had been burnt away by devastating prairie fires. But La Salle and his party did not tarry long, for their provisions had begun to fail and the men were dissatisfied.

HUBBARD VISITS TERRITORY

So it was that the fur trader, to whom all three counties owe their settlement came, Gordon Hubbard. Hubbard was a Vermonter, who had joined Astor's huge organization at the age of fifteen. He had become

experienced in dealing with the Indians at Bureau on the Illinois river and later in Michigan. 1823 found him in charge of a crew, which came down the St. Joseph river, portaged to the Kankakee and down the Iroquois to the site of old Bunkum (now Iroquois). With him was Noel Le Vasseur, who had scouted this region two years before.

LeVasseur, who was later to found the village of Bourbonnais and become Kankakee county's first settler, soon became Hubbard's trusted aide. They were colorful men-clad in hunting dress of buckskin, crimson sashes of the voyageurs, and carrying tomahawks and hunting knives.

FIRST WHITE SETTLEMENT

At Bunkum a trading post was soon erected and negotiations with the Indians began at once. The stock

(Continued on page 15)

Richard De Young

"GLADIOLUS BULB GROWER"

1 1/2 Miles North of Wichert

ST. ANNE,

ROUTE 3

ILLINOIS

COMPLIMENTS OF THE KANKAKEE COUNTY REPUBLICAN CANDIDATES. LET'S ELECT

New Faces in the Court House

Don't you feel that these jobs
should be passed around?

For County Judge

C. D. HENRY Jr.

For Sheriff

DANIEL E. BERGAN

For Treasurer

FRED A. PREISEL

For Clerk

HECTOR J. Le BEAU

For Superintendent of Schools

GILBERT A. WILLIS

THEY NEED THE OFFICE THEY SEEK AND WILL
APPRECIATE YOUR SUPPORT THEY ARE
QUALIFIED AND DESERVING.

Will, Iroquois, Kankakee Co. History -- Cont.

in trade at the posts consisted chiefly of gaudy red and blue cloth, calculated to please the squaws, trinkets, tools, paints for the braves adornment, tobacco and whiskey. No money was used in making purchases--furs and particularly beaver formed the medium of exchange.

Other trading posts managed by Hubbard were to appear at Old Middleport and Danyville. His crews worked all through this part of Illinois. Indians went out to hunt each winter, returned to the posts to trade each spring, and then Hubbard and his crews took the loads of furs overland to Chicago (Fort Dearborn). There they were packed into great row boats and the journey to Mackinac Island, headquarters of the Astor Company began. In the fall the posts resumed business.

HUBBARD MARRIES
INDIAN PRINCESS

It was while at the Iroquois post that Hubbard married the Indian princess, Wach-e-kee, niece of Chief Tamin. With the influx of white population, Hubbard was forced to divorce his Indian wife, and she later wed LeVasseur, who named the county seat of Iroquois county in her honor--"Watseka".

FUR COMPANY BLAZES TRAIL

The Fur Company brought about the trail from Fort Dearborn to Vincennes. The trail was made and used constantly by Gurdon Hubbard, and is still known as the Hubbard Trail. This direct route might be said to be our first road, for over it travellers passed for years; it was used in carrying the first government mail; and in 1833 at a special session of the General Assembly it was ordered that a state road be located

(Continued on page 16)

Blatz Old Heidelberg Beer

— and —

Blatz Sodas

Key City Beverage Co.

GEORGE R. SEARLS

380 S. East Ave.

—:—

Kankakee, Ill.

Will, Iroquois, Kankakee Co. History -- Cont.

from Vincennes to Chicago, and that milestones be placed thereon. Hubbard's route was most direct and favorable, and therefore was chosen to be the state road. Some of the milestones are still in existence, preserved by the D. A. R., and placed at various points along the "Trace".

POTTAWATOMIES FORCED TO LEAVE HOMES

In 1838, just one hundred years ago, the Pottawatomies were forced to leave their native hunting grounds and through the Treaty of Tippecanoe were granted a reservation near Council Bluffs, Iowa. The passing of the Indians was a sorrowful occasion. From eye-witness accounts of the huge procession mournfully taking its departure, we are able to conjure up a picture breathtaking in its color and majesty and poignant in its sadness.

With the departure of the Pottawatomies and the coming scarcity of game, fur trading died a natural death, and farming was in the ascendency. Prairie schooners and wagons were common sights, clearings were made, crops were sown, and homes established.

MOTHER NATURE IS UNKIND TO SETTLERS

Life was not easy--it was rather rough and tumble in those days. One worked, played and fought hard. One had to in order to survive. Many staple foodstuffs and supplies had to be fetched by wagon from Chicago and during the time around 1844, wheat and corn must needs be taken to LaFayette, Indiana, where was the nearest mill. Shortly afterward a mill was erected at Wilmington and another at Milford. We find in old accounts, remarks upon the 'convenience' which these new mills afforded. Clearing the woods away to make space for farming, building log houses, spinning and weaving cloth, making candles--all were only a part of the pioneer day. Smallpox, fever, ague and itch came to plague the hardiest of the settlers and Mother Nature could be anything but kind in her prairie fires, storms, floods and droughts.

BARN RAISING; QUILTING; HUSKING BEES

Yet it was not all drudgery and hardships, the first comers had fun, too, whether it was a barn raising, quilting or husking bee. It is noticeable in these three popular forms of entertainment that something in the line of 'work' was accomplished, too. An old tale is told of one of

(Continued on page 17)

— COMPLIMENTS OF —

Democratic County Candidates

KANKAKEE COUNTY

County Judge	County Sheriff
<input type="checkbox"/> JOHN H. BECKERS	<input type="checkbox"/> WM. B. BROWN
County Clerk	County Treasurer
<input type="checkbox"/> LUELLA E. TANNER	<input type="checkbox"/> EUGENE A. SMITH
Superintendent of Schools	
<input type="checkbox"/> CLARENCE J. KENNEDY	

Will, Iroquois, Kankakee Co. History -- Cont.

the very first dances held in this region. It was given in 1831 at the

CELEBRATION ON MOMENCE ISLAND

home of a Mr. Friend on Hickory Creek, in what is now Will county. Festivities began at noon with a bountiful repast of venison and prairie chicken, corn-dodgers, wild honey, melons, wild grapes and pumpkin pie---all the delicacies the country could afford. Among the guests were several young officers from Fort Dearborn, who had ridden on horseback to the dance. When, at two o'clock in the afternoon, the dancing began, these young blades began quickly to charm the country maidens with their "city airs and graces". Black looks cast their way by the local boys had no effect, but when next morning came and the dance terminated, revenge was taken. The Dearborn bucks found their horses minus manes and tails.

In 1840 a celebration was held on the island in Momence on the Fourth of July. Notices had been posted all along the Hubbard Trail, over which at this time an immense amount of freight moved. Here was an event which would break the monotony, and a large company of settlers gathered for a picnic dinner, gossip and relaxation. The picnic was such a success that for years happenings were dated in everyone's mind as, so many months before or after "the Celebration".

NEW COUNTIES ARE FORMED

By the time the early thirties arrived population had so increased in Eastern Illinois that the formation

(Continued on page 18)

Donated By A Friend

Sunnyside Greenhouse

"CUT FLOWERS FOR ALL OCCASIONS"

H. A. BUSSY, Prop.

PHONE 1881

WALDRON RD.

KANKAKEE, ILL.

Momence Greenhouse

WALTER JOHNSON, Mgr.

Momence, Ill.,

—:—

Telephone 196

Will, Iroquois, Kankakee Co. History -- Cont.

of new counties was called for. In 1832-33 an act was passed creating the county of Will--so named from Conrad Will, a member of the Legislature who had died just before. A provision was made in the Act, locating the county seat in Joliet.

EARLIEST ELECTION IS THAT OF JACKSON

One of the earliest elections in these districts was the presidential campaign, at which Andrew Jackson was re-elected and Martin Van Buren was chosen vice-president. Earnest political workers from Danville had canvassed the county in the interests of "Old Hickory".

Will county, which had been a part of Cook county, came into being only three years later--1836. Through the efforts of James Walker and Dr. A. W. Bowen, who went to Vandalia as members of the Third House,

KANKAKEE COUNTY'S BIRTH

Kankakee county is more or less the offspring of the two other coun-

(Continued on Page 19)

SPLEAR BROTHERS GREENHOUSES

FRANK C. SPLEAR, Prop

FLORISTS

GREENHOUSES AND PERENNIAL GARDENS

Located Two and One-Half Miles Northeast of Courthouse

PHONE MAIN 443

—:—

KANKAKEE, ILL.

Will, Iroquois, Kankakee Co. History -- Cont.

ties, for Will county extended to the Kankakee River on the south, and Iroquois had the south shore of the Kankakee as its northern boundary. Kankakee county, as originally organized, was formed from territory detached from Will and Iroquois counties, by virtue of a special election held April 5, 1853. It was authorized by an Act of the Legislature on February 11th of that same year.

In June another election was held to determine whether the village of Momence or that of Kankakee should be the county seat. The result was in favor of the latter--the election is said to be the hottest and most closely contested ever held in this county.

BOOMS WERE COMMON IN THESE TIMES

One of the most interesting things from the view-point of 1938 is the way in which these farm lands were ballyhooed and boomed to the citizens in the East. Whenever a new territory was opened, and settlers desired, even as today, there were always a few enterprising souls with a gift for advertising, who can make the Sahara Desert seem like the Gardens of Babylon.

Perhaps the most amusing instance of land floating to occur within the boundaries of the three counties was that of the "Steamboat Paradise"--Plato. Plato was, in the early thirties, as it is now, a small settlement on the Iroquois River, a few miles east of the town of Ashkum. A few of its citizens decided that here was the ideal spot for the new county seat of Iroquois county. So, they drew up an elaborate prospectus, including a beautiful picture, setting forth the glories of Plato--"a river city, center of steamboat

traffic, future metropolis of the Middle West". Representatives were sent back to Philadelphia, Boston and New York City, to interest the Easterners in buying town lots and fine farm sites. And then the blow fell. The county seat was not located in Plato, as was expected, and the chief charm and attraction was no more. The metropolis remained a tiny settlement--just what it is today, and dwellers on the Iroquois have yet to be awakened by steamboat whistles.

PROGRESS OF TRANSPORTATION

Perhaps no better indication of Progress exists than the changes which take place in methods of transportation. Like most parts of the United States this area furnishes a graphic illustration. From old Pokagon's Wagon to a modern airport is a jump, indeed. Yet, it has happened in the span of little more than a century. Pokagon, the son of the wilderness, who had never seen a white man or a white man's tools, made for himself a crude wagon, a manner of vehicle totally different from any seen in this new country. The two massive wheels, made from cross sections of a great white oak, were the first to sink a furrow in Kankakeeland--years before the Fort Dearborn Massacre. When Hubbard and LeVasseur came here, and even when LaSalle and Hennepin first set eyes on the Wilderness, the Indian ponies, birch canoes and travoys were of inestimable value in traversing the difficult terrain. Over Hubbard's Trail, of which we have already written, passed a steady procession of almost primitive travel. Later on, when the settlers began to come, the

(Continued on page 20)

Will, Iroquois, Kankakee Co. History -- Cont.

covered wagon and prairie schooner; the ox teams and fine horses lent their color and touch of domesticity to the scene.

RIVERS CONVENIENT

The region was fortunate in its system of rivers--then so much more important to travel than they are today. They offered an easier way of transportation and freighting than did the land. The DesPlaines (whose name means "sugar maples"), the Kankakee and the Iroquois, with their numerous tributary creeks, made access to the Illinois and Mississippi Rivers, and thence to the trading centers of St. Louis and New Orleans. In order to provide easier passage from Lake Michigan to the Illinois the Illinois-Michigan Canal was planned and finally opened in 1848. This was without a doubt the greatest step forward in water transportation ever made in northern Illinois. The opening was the occasion of a glorious celebration. A boat from Chicago met those from the Illinois, cannon were fired and the welkin rang with cheers.

FIRST MAIL ROUTE

Mail was first carried by runner, then via pony express, and the regular route was from Danville to Chicago. Later stage routes were established leading into Chicago. With the coming of the railroads the old days and methods of doing things passed.

RAILROADS PIERCE REGION

Through the efforts of Stephen A. Douglas movements were started in Congress in 1850 which led to the incorporating of the Illinois Central

Railroad in 1851. Twenty years later, in 1871, the Chicago and Eastern Illinois was completed as far south as Danville. Other railroads followed and their importance to the growth of a farming country were realized. Shipping was made with facility from almost any point and the territory became what it is today--a great corn and stock raising area. The importance of the railroads in the metamorphosis of the Wilderness is immense.

Development of a later day in the three counties is too familiar to everyone to warrant mention here--for most of them have come within the memories of people yet living.

So it is that we have come down through the years. Perhaps it is well for all of us who dwell in the comfort and comparative security of '38 to look back now and then to the Wilderness Days--when hardship and privation were the prime factors of existence. But let us not forget the aura of beauty and romance with which history has endowed every foot of ground upon which we tread.

EARLY DAY'S PAGEANT ON BEAUTIFUL KANKAKEE

The Pageant of the Early Days, which will be shown during the Gladiolus Festival in Momence, in a beautiful, natural setting on the banks of the historical Kankakee, will attempt to re-create the days gone by. One will be able to see the Pottawatomie tribes, the trading post, the first settlers and the steps in advancement that have been made.

Those of us who have often expressed a wish that we might have seen this country when it was new, will have a chance for at least a tiny glimpse into the past.

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